

In the United States Court of Federal Claims
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS
No. 21-0086V

KIMBERLY CATES,

v.
Petitioner,

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: January 27, 2025

John Robert Howie, Howie Law, PC, Dallas, TX, for Petitioner.

Eleanor Hanson, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for Respondent.

DECISION ON ATTORNEY'S FEES AND COSTS¹

On January 5, 2021, Kimberly Cates filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*² (the "Vaccine Act"). On August 21, 2023, Petitioner filed an amended petition. Petitioner alleges that she suffered a left shoulder injury related to vaccine administration ("SIRVA") resulting from an influenza vaccine received on November 2, 2018. Amended Petition at 1. On November 14, 2024, I issued a decision awarding damages to Petitioner, based upon Respondent's proffer. ECF No. 53.

¹Because this Decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action taken in this case, it must be made publicly accessible and will be posted on the United States Court of Federal Claims' website, and/or at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/uscourts/national/cofc>, in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002. 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2018) (Federal Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services). **This means the Decision will be available to anyone with access to the internet.** In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), Petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within this definition, I will redact such material from public access.

² National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all section references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2018).

Petitioner has now filed a motion for attorney's fees and costs, requesting an award of \$49,338.52 (representing \$48,669.40 for fees and \$669.12 for costs). Petitioner's Application for Attorneys' Fees, filed Nov. 14, 2024, ECF No. 57. In accordance with General Order No. 9, counsel for Petitioner represents that Petitioner incurred no out-of-pocket expenses. ECF No. 57-2.

Respondent reacted to the motion on November 15, 2024, indicating that he is satisfied that the statutory requirements for an award of attorney's fees and costs are met in this case, but deferring resolution of the amount to be awarded to my discretion. Respondent's Response to Motion at 2-3, 3 n.2, ECF No. 58. The same day, Petitioner filed a reply noting only "that Respondent has made no specific objection to Petitioner's Application." ECF No. 59.

The rates requested for work performed through the end of 2024 are reasonable and consistent with our prior determinations, and will therefore be adopted.

I also note that, although the parties were able to ultimately agree upon the appropriate amount of damages, this case required additional briefing regarding this issue. See Status Report, filed July 10, 2024, ECF No. 47 (reporting an impasse in damages discussions); Petitioner's Brief in Support of Damages, filed Sept. 26, 2024, ECF No. 51. Petitioner's counsel expended approximately 11.5 hours drafting the motion. ECF No. 57 at 6-7. I find this time to have been reasonably incurred. (And all time billed to the matter was also reasonably incurred.)

Furthermore, Petitioner has provided supporting documentation for all claimed costs, ECF No. 57-3. And Respondent offered no specific objection to the rates or amounts sought. I have reviewed the requested costs and find them to be reasonable.

The Vaccine Act permits an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs for successful claimants. Section 15(e). **I award a total of \$49,338.52 (representing \$48,669.40 for fees and \$669.12 for costs) to be paid through an ACH deposit to Petitioner's counsel's IOLTA account for prompt disbursement.** In the absence of a timely-filed motion for review (see Appendix B to the Rules of the Court), the Clerk of Court shall enter judgment in accordance with this Decision.³

³ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), the parties may expedite entry of judgment by filing a joint notice renouncing their right to seek review.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/Brian H. Corcoran

Brian H. Corcoran

Chief Special Master